/639 cont./

581 /Translated from Spanish./ Some visitors describe the beautiful, pleasing figure, even for the European eye, of individual young Fuegians; there were even some splendid specimens of human beings among them. That these persons, further idealized in the imaginations of young people anxious to marry, are the most sought after for a life-long union in marriage is too natural to have to be specifically substantiated. Anyone who is only moderately endowed physically is content to find a partner who is his equal. Nevertheless, luck and chance sometimes casts an unusually charming girl, and a lovable creature, into the arms of a less attractive boy for immediate marriage (13).

•[115]

13. In long conversations with Fred and Nelly Lawrence I obtained the details, difficult to come by elsewhere, from which this account was written; later I also talked with other informants about it.

4. Freedom in the Selection of a Mate

584 Even those travelers and missionaries who are generally reliable give unclear accounts about the freedom of choice of girls before marriage, and these sometimes seem to be clearly contradictory. The uninfluenced private decision of young people who wish to marry is the rule and custom, but in exceptional cases a few old people, namely, the parents of the girl, violate this by their selfish and ruthless conduct. We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that the various assertions of travelers are sometimes mere fabrications and almost without exception are based on insufficient observation. Even in Bridges we can trace a change in his own opinion about marital conditions, since in later writings he undeniably contradicts what he said in the first years of his sojourn with the Fuegians. Obviously, any kind of courtship among marriageable young people would be futile if they were obliged to submit unconditionally to the arbitrary decision of other persons. Before we set forth the true state of affairs in this important arrangement, I shall repeat the divergent opinions of several Europeans of the last few decades. The shallow

/862 cont./

X 881 [304] Finally we must mention here the only form of tattooing which was formerly customary among these Fuegians, but of which I could not find a trace on any of the Yamana living today. The reports which I received on this subject may be regarded as reliable (281). Soon after the beginning of the long ceremony, after

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281. Several men, as well as Nelly Lawrence, spoke of this custom. The above data were given me by old Pedro, together with Whaits. The latter is the oldest surviving Yamana, and although I examined him very carefully, I could not find the faintest trace of tattooing on him. He told me: "When I was a candidate in the Great Hut my countrymen gave up these marks, for they did not wish to appear before the missionaries with them!" I suspect that they wanted to avoid divulging their secret initiation with the tattooing which was done at that time.

[177]

the candidates have become somewhat accustomed to the new living habits, all the inmates of the Great Hut go down to the flat beach the first thing in the morning if the weather is good. Only one of the guards remains behind. They choose a sheltered inlet with a shallow sea floor. The men, who are completely naked, and the women form separate groups. In their midst they have the candidates, the men taking the boys and the women, the girls. The men who arrive first step into the water and stand close together. The women arrange themselves in such a way that they form a more or less closed circle around the men. Then they all jump and leap about, play with one another, splash each other, perform all kinds of movements with their bodies, duck the candidates and drag them along under water. They disport themselves in every conceivable way with the members of their own sex, the outer circle of women never mingling with the group of men. After a time they come out of the water in this formation, and it is not until then that the circle of women breaks up, opening an exit

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
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PREFACE

THIS account of the natives of Tierra del Fuego is the result of a three months' visit to the island, accompanied by Mr. J. Linzee Weld, during the summer of 1924–25. We studied Ona Indians at three settlements: one at the southeast corner of Lake Fagnano, one to the northeast of the same lake, and the third lying east of the Laguna de Pescados. Yahgan Indians were encountered at Tierra Mayor, Cambaceres bay, Gable island, and Puerto Mejillones on Navarin island.

Although the time available was short, aids to study were unusual. Thus, Cooper's "Bibliography" offered in a readily available form an accurate analysis of previous work, with an exception to be noted presently. Furthermore, the help of three intelligent white men—Messrs. Lucas and William Bridges and Fred. Lawrence,—all intimately acquainted with the Indian lore and languages, made it possible to procure accurate data with unusual celerity and facility. All the information thus obtained was checked by the Indians and vice versa, while just before I left the island Mr. William Bridges most kindly went over all my notes and vocabularies. Therefore I feel confident that they are detailed and accurate.

In planning my work, owing to the limited time available it seemed wise to concentrate on obvious and concrete problems which could be covered with reasonable thoroughness. Although the studies of Gusinde and Koppers[1] had not then appeared in print, I was told that they had worked chiefly on the religion, initiation ceremonies, folklore, and linguistics. Hence my most profitable course was to devote myself primarily to the material culture and technology. This decision was fostered by the fact that both tribes had been reduced almost to extinction by a recent epidemic of influenza, so that the older men who once took part in native rites had died almost without exception. Secondly, on Beagle channel a thorough examination of camp-sites was undertaken with a view of determining their nature and age so far as

[1] Consult the Bibliography in the appendix.

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
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114 published a broadsheet with the Lord's prayer. Both are written in the ordinary alphabet with a ˘ to denote the short vowels and soft g.

194 As for the nature of the Yahgan tongue, in direct contrast to Ona, it is soft and pleasant to the ear. There is a great abundance of vowel sounds, and the pronunciation of consonants presents no difficulties. The line between *p* and *b* is loosely drawn. There is a soft and a hard g, and also a soft *ch* sound (*q*).

197 According to Mr. Fred. Lawrence, of Remolino, generally regarded as the best living authority on the Yahgan language, in the old days there were five distinct dialects, distributed as follows:

1. Central dialect, including Ushuaia and Murray narrows. This is the speech recorded in the Bridges dictionaries.
2. Eastern dialect, spoken from Harberton eastward and on Lennox island, New island, etc.
3. Western dialect, found from Cape Divide westward.
4. Wollaston Islands dialect.
5. New Year's Sound dialect, spoken to the south and west of False Cape Horn and on the southern part of Hoste island.

These dialects are said to have differed from one another as much as Scotch from Cockney; that is to say, they were mutually intelligible but there was wide variation in accent and the choice of words. Thus the double-barbed harpoon is *waíki* in the west and *wek* in the east; the fish-spear is *ushá̆waia* in the east and *shushróya* in the central dialect; bark of the *Nothofagus betuloides* is *aíirshu* in the east and *afirshun* at Ushuaia; a sling is *mata·wí* in the east and *watewí* in the central dialect, etc. Today it is difficult to know just what dialect one is hearing, because the few surviving Yahgan live together much of the time and have fused their speech. However, the fact that considerable divergence once existed within such a small geographical limit indicates that but little movement of the tribe as a whole had taken place for centuries, at least.

115 The Yahgan words in the present text were obtained chiefly from Mr. William Bridges and Mr. Fred. Lawrence, who speak the central dialect; from William, born at Halupaí (see fig. 98); from Walter, a Lennox islander; from Charley, son of a Haush called Inioih and a Yahgan woman; from Mary, a westerner. The four Indians mentioned were all mission-reared and therefore today

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speak the central dialect. The entire vocabulary was checked by Mr. William Bridges and any words not in the central dialect were noted.

The richness of the language is indicated by the more than 32,000 words brought together by Rev. Thomas Bridges. Many of these words, of course, are compounds, but such a vast number are fundamentally due to unusual specialization in meaning.

On the other hand, Yahgan exhibits the lack, usual among primitive people, of abstract ideas and generalizations. In fact, even in English (which, due to missionary training, some of the Indians spoke fairly well) the Yahgan exhibited inability to grasp the concept of generalities.

The manner of counting was even more primitive than the Ona count, for the Yahgan had no words for 4 and 6, which, to be sure, were compound numbers in the primitive Ona system. The Yahgan count is:

1.	*hikóli*	one
2.	*kambaíbi*	two
3.	*matén*	three
5.	*hikóli iirsh* [1]	one hand
10.	*kambaí iirsh*	two hands

Clothing

From Fitzroy's description of the Yahgan, cited above, it appears that there was very little order or regularity in their scanty dress. However, though seemingly inadequate, their clothes were of well-defined forms which we shall describe. It is no exaggeration or overstatement to remark that, considering the climate in which they had to live, this southernmost tribe had less body-covering than any other people in the world. As compared to the Ona, their garments, similar in nature, were deficient in size, while the stiff and unyielding skins they employed from their very nature lacked the warmth supplied by the pliable, voluminous, and snug-fitting robes of the Foot Indians. We must add that individuals of both sexes and all ages often went entirely naked.

1. Cape.—The usual cape worn in summer and winter alike by both men and women was a seal or sea-otter skin. Sometimes two

[Text Continues on page 123]

[1] Bove gives the word *cupaipa* for 5. It was not known to any Yahgan Indian or member of the Bridges or Lawrence families encountered by the writer.